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General

Thailand, formerly Siam, is located in Southeast Asia and borders the Gulf of Thailand and the Andaman Sea. It is bounded on the W by Burma (Myanmar), on the E by Laos and Kampuchea (Cambodia), and on the S by Malaysia.

The terrain consists of a central plain, with a plateau in the E part and mountains elsewhere.

The climate is mostly tropical. It is rainy and warm during the Southwest Monsoon, from mid-May to September. It is dry and cool during the Northeast Monsoon, from November to mid-March. The S part is always hot and humid.

Buoyage System

The IALA Buoyage System (Region A) is in effect. See Chart No. 1 for further IALA Buoyage System information.

Currency

The official unit of currency is the baht, consisting of 100 satang.

Government



Flag of Thailand

Thailand, formerly Siam, is a constitutional monarchy with the King being the Chief of State. The Prime Minister, the head of government, is elected by the members of the House of Representatives.

The bicameral Rathasapha (National Assembly) consists of a 200-member directly-elected Wuthisapha (Senate) and a 500-member directly-elected Sapha Phuthaen Ratsadon (House of Representatives). All members of the Rathasapha serve 4-year terms.

For administrative purposes, the country is divided into 76 provinces (chadgwat), each under the control of a governor.

The legal system is based on civil law, with influences of common law.

The capital is Bangkok.

Holidays

The following holidays are observed:

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| New Year's Day | January 1 |
| Labor Day | May 1 |
| Coronation Day | May 5 |
| Her Majesty the Queen's Birthday | August 12 |
| His Majesty the King's Birthday | December 5 |
| Constitution Day | December 10 |
| Christmas Day | December 25 |
| New Year's Eve | December 31 |

Other holidays, which vary from year to year depending on the appearance of the moon, are Magha Puja Day, Chakri Day, Songkran Day, Visakha Bucha Day, Ahsalaha Bucha Day, Kao Pansa Day, and Chulalongkorn Day.

Industries

The major industries include agricultural processing, textiles, cement, wood products, tin and tungsten ore mining, tourism, and light manufacturing (jewelry, appliances, integrated circuits, and plastics).

The principal crops include rice, maize, sugarcane, kenaf, tobacco, tapioca root, soybeans, rubber, opium, and cotton. Teak,

yang, and other woods, and charcoal are the main forestry products.

Languages

The official language is Thai. There are also several ethnic and regional dialects. English is used widely by the elite and in commerce.

Regulations

General

The laws relating to the production, possession, distribution, and use of narcotic drugs are extremely severe in Thailand. Penalties for infringement range from prison sentences and fines to life imprisonment and even execution.

Crew members, when on shore leave, must not carry sheath knives or other dangerous weapons.

Signals

Thailand requires that vessels preparing to leave port or Thai waters shall fly the International Code flag "P" indicating that the vessel is about to proceed to sea. If the vessel is to depart in the morning, this flag is to be flown in the afternoon of the previous day. If departure is in the afternoon, the flag is to be flown in the morning.

The vessel shall notify the harbormaster at least 6 hours before the expected time of departure.

Within Thai territorial waters, merchant vessels may be signaled by Thai naval craft to stop, or to proceed in a certain direction, for the purpose of a search.

By day, signals from the International Code will be used by naval patrol craft. By night, repeated short and long flashes will be made by naval patrol craft, or a rocket, from which a red flare is ejected, will be fired. Vessels that do not stop in answer to these signals will be fired on.

Thai naval aircraft will make the appropriate signal from the International Code. They will fly low round the vessel and then proceed towards a certain direction indicating that the vessel must proceed in that direction. Vessels ignoring this signal will be warned by a burst of machine-gun fire directed ahead of the vessel.

Time Zone

The Time Zone description is GOLF (-7). Daylight Savings Time is not observed.

World Time Zone Chart

<http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/ref/pdf/802801.pdf>

U.S. Embassy

The U.S. Embassy is situated at 95 Wireless (Wittayu) Road, Bangkok 10330.

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U. S. Embassy Thailand Home Page

<http://usa.or.th>